

VAAP Men Will Discuss New Plant With Superior

T 2-18-69 By FRED SCHNEIDER

Plans for the proposed new 3.7 million TNT production facility at Tyner will be discussed with Brig. Gen. B. R. Luczak, commanding officer of the Ammunition Procurement and Supply Agency, and members of his staff, at Joliet, Ill., APSA headquarters, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Maj. James J. Slater, commanding officer of the Volunteer Army Ammunition plant, announced Saturday that he and Norl Hamilton, manager of the VAAP for Atlas Chemical Industries Inc., contract operator of the plant, will present refined and modified plans for the facility in Joliet.

Maj. Slater announced in September that he had recommended that a new and advanced design TNT plant be built here. This followed a study initiated by Atlas some weeks previously. The officer took this report, added his own studies and then called upon the Corps of Engineers for some cost estimates.

Since the basic plan was prepared, studies have been conducted that have resulted in improvements, but so far as cost is concerned and other basic details there has been no material change. In a project of such type studies continue over a lengthy period until a plan believed to be the best possible in its various details is achieved, he said.

The new plant as recommended would enable a reduction in the actual cost of making TNT of more than 27 per cent it would reduce air and water pollution to a point where it would no longer be objectionable, Maj. Slater and Hamilton said.

They stated that it is estimated pollution would almost be eliminated by a new plant employing the continuous nitration process. They declared that steps already taken have resulted in materially reducing air and water pollution at Chickamauga Lake, which have been the subject of complaints.

The commanding officer said that since the reactivation of the present TNT plant about \$8 million has been allocated for pollution control improvements and thus far about 85 per cent of the program has been completed.

The improvement that has been made in air pollution control is shown by air monitoring equipment installed at and near the plant. The Public Health Service set up a unit near the VAAP unit at the Rod and Gun Club and the records of the two units were unbelievably close, Hamilton said.

They show the progress that has been made. The TNT plant also has devices to check stream pollution and these records also show material improvement has been made.

Maj. Slater explained the new plant, if recommendations are approved and it is built, will have the very important advantages of having "built-in pollution controls" instead of adding them later.

The present TNT plant now has 10 production lines and the new plant also would have 10 lines which could be built in the production area where six lines were removed from the original facility after the close of World War II.

What would happen to the present TNT plant would remain to be determined if the new one is built. After it is completed the present plant could be shut down and placed on standby or if its production is needed it could continue to be operated. The present plant was built in 1941 and twice has been placed in standby and reactivated.

Maj. Slater said that this will be the first time an oral presentation has been made to the APSA but ever since the original recommendation was made the agency has been kept informed of the results obtained in the continuing studies. He expressed no opinion as to the time before action is taken by the agency.

From the APSA the recommendation would go to the Munitions Command at Dover, N.J., and from that agency it would go upward through various channels before final action is taken. In the case of building such a facility the Corps of Engineers would be primarily responsible during construction.

"It is believed that a new plant would give a slight increase in production capability and there would be a substantial saving in the cost of manufacturing, about \$12 million a year," Maj. Slater said. "The manufacturing cost now is running about \$43.5 million a year."

"Also there would be lesser maintenance expense in the case of the new plant. It would provide better and more convenient working conditions. If it should be placed on standby the cost of bringing it back into operating condition should be less."

In addition to these advantages, he pointed out, pollution would be almost eliminated and certainly would be reduced to the point it would no longer be objectionable.

It was estimated the new plant would require about two years to complete. However, part of it could be placed in operation as sections are completed. If increased TNT production were not needed lines of the old plant would be closed down as the new plant goes into operation thus reducing the amount of pollution.

VAAP CONVERSION TO GAS IS NEAR

Fuel Will Be Cleaner and
More Economical,
Plant Reports

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Conversion to natural gas as a fuel at the Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant will be completed by the end of July, it is reported in the TNT plant's publication, Atlas Volunteer.

The first step in the final phase of conversion from No. 2 fuel oil was taken March 23 when a burner in the Redwater plant was "lit-off" with natural gas. By March 28 four of the 12 Redwater burners were using gas.

The remaining eight will be converted by the end of May. By the end of July it is expected that the 11 burner units at the sulfuric acid concentrators will be using natural gas.

"Thus the conversion to the cleaner, more economical fuel will be completed almost three years after the project was begun during the rehabilitation program in 1965," the article states.

"The project was 95 per cent complete when work on it was suspended in 1966 when contract negotiations and discussions between the Army, governmental regulatory agencies and gas suppliers delayed the completion of the conversion."

"The way was made clear for the final hook-up of gas lines and the actual use of natural gas as a fuel when Atlas signed a contract with the Chattanooga Gas Co. at mid-March by which the gas company will supply fuel for the operation of the plant."

"Playing a leading role in securing the government's permission for going ahead with the project was Louis R. DePrisco, manager of materials, who carried on extensive negotiations with Chattanooga Gas Co., APSA and other governmental agencies, including the Army Power Procurement Office in Washington, D.C."

"DePrisco said the savings in money the first year gas is used will amount to at least \$233,000 and a minimum of \$201,000 will be saved in each future year."

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